



News Release

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S SPECIAL REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED BY THE MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION COMPLETED

(TORONTO) Auditor General of Ontario Jim McCarter today delivered his review of year-end grants provided by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to Premier Dalton McGuinty.

"We found that the grant decision-making processes used were not open, transparent or accountable," McCarter said. "The decision as to who got what was often based on conversations rather than applications."

In the 2005/06 and 2006/07 fiscal years, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration provided \$12.1 million and \$20.4 million in year-end capital grants to a number of non-profit citizenship, cultural and immigration organizations. Earlier this spring, questions were raised in the Ontario Legislature surrounding the awarding of these grants, and in May, Premier McGuinty requested that the Auditor General review the decision-making processes used to provide these grants.

The review found that all potential recipients were not informed of the availability of funds, there was no application process, and there was no consistent process used to assess potential recipients. The grant decision-making process was essentially handled by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration's Office, with minimal input from ministry staff.

"What also concerned us was that many of the organizations who received significant grants in 2006/07 had no prior relationship with the ministry," McCarter said. "Therefore, it was all the more important to ensure that appropriate processes were put in place." The review noted that even senior ministry officials expressed concerns regarding the need for due diligence.

While not included in the Premier's request, because of questions raised in the Legislature regarding whether some organizations received grants because of political ties, some work was done in this area. The review found no evidence that any organization received a grant because it had political ties.

"However, in a few cases those ties did exist, and when combined with a grant awarding process lacking openness and accountability, a perception of favouritism can be created if that organization receives a grant," McCarter added.

The Office of the Auditor General is independent of government and its administration. This independence is an essential safeguard that enables it to fulfill its auditing and reporting responsibilities objectively. The Office provides information and advice that assists the Legislative Assembly in holding the government accountable for its stewardship of public funds.

-30-

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